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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for a school-wide simulated election on the state, county, or local level to be conducted by high school social studies or political science classes are provided. The objective is to prepare students for observation of and participation in a real political campaign in the community. Details for the election, establishing political parties, nominations, the campaign, assemblies, party committees, election day activities, and coordinating the program are outlined. Students decide how many and which offices will appear on the ballot and create selection, platform, publicity, campaign, and registration committees within each party. An optional finance committee establishes campaign "fees" and monitors campaign spending. Appendices include a sample registration form, petition for office, political party platform, and press release. (KC)

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STUDENT SIMULATED ELECTION

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STUDENT SIMULATED ELECTION

The Institute for Political and Legal Education was developed through the cooperative efforts of the Institute staff, educators in local New Jersey districts, and the staff of the Office of Program Development, Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation/Field Servies, the Department of Education, State of New Jersey. The political and legal materials were developed between 1971 and 1974 with funding from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title III.

In 1974, the political education program was validated as successful, cost-effective, and exportable by the standards and guidelines of the United States Office of Education. As a result, the program is now funded through ESEA, Title III as a demonstration site to provide dissemination materials and services to interested educators.

Barry E. Lefkowitz,
Director

STUDENT SIMULATED ELECTION
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INTRODUCTION

The simulated (or "mock") student election is one that is held within the high school to provide students with training and experience in the mechanics of political campaign operations. These elections can be modeled after the campaigns of state, county, and local candidates. Students successful in being elected should receive an internship in the positions they attain or some other suitable "reward." The experience that those involved will receive through this political exercise should serve as an excellent preparation for observation of and participation in a real political campaign in the community.

This booklet is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide on how to arrange for and conduct this activity in your school. The best way to organize such a project is to have it be the responsibility of a particular social studies class in the school, preferably one in which the focus is American government and political behavior. (This simulated election was originally developed for use as part of the Voter Education curriculum of the Institute for Political and Legal Education).

The following is an outline of the essential elements of the simulated election. (Specific details on these aspects of the program will be covered elsewhere in this manual).

ELECTION: Your school will hold an election for offices on the state, county, and/or local level.

POLITICAL PARTIES: Your group will be split into two parties similar to the Democratic and Republican parties.

NOMINATIONS: Parties will nominate candidates for all levels of political office.

CAMPAIGN: During these proceedings you will learn how to formulate and execute a political campaign.

REGISTRATION: A registration drive which attempts to qualify all students to vote in the election should be part of the proceedings.

ASSEMBLIES: There should be a series of two: the first will deal with the introduction of the program and an instructional presentation by a person from the Board of Elections on how to operate a voting machine; the second assembly will be the introduction of parties, candidates, and platforms.

PARTY COMMITTEES: Each party will also have within its structure a selection committee, platform committee, and publicity/campaign committees.

ELECTION DAY: Your group will participate in the vote tabulation process of an election day. Your group will be running the actual business of a typical election day (i.e., workers at the polls, poll watchers, challengers, etc.).

WINNING CANDIDATES: The elected candidates will be rewarded by having a "Day" when they will actually substitute for real officeholders (e.g., the student who ran for Freeholder gets to serve as a Freeholder).

COORDINATION OF PROGRAM: You will elect an overall chairperson to coordinate all the different segments of your student election program.

USE OF VOTING MACHINES

Prior approval must be received from the County Board of Elections if voting machines are to be secured for use in the simulated election. It is recommended that machines be used on election day to make the voting procedures more realistic and for the positive carry-over educational value this experience will have for students when they vote in general elections. The request for County Board approval should be made at least THREE months in advance of the date desired for use of the machines. It should be noted that the election will have to take place early in the school year (by mid-October), since machines are required to be in the possession of Election Board Officials (for final inspection) two weeks prior to the November elections. If you have difficulty in getting the machines, contact your state legislator. He can be extremely helpful in this matter.

DUTIES OF ELECTION CHAIRPERSON

The first step for developing the simulated election is to select and define the duties of an overall project chairperson. This individual will oversee and coordinate the entire election process. He or she must be above all, a non-partisan participant in the proceedings. The chairperson will be responsible for nearly all of the liason groundwork that must be accomplished between your group and many, many organizations, officials, and levels of the government. Your chairperson will act as a moderator-coordinator; he/she will work closely with your faculty advisor to guarantee that the most expedient and least confusing methods of party selection, informative assemblies, and registration of voters are employed.

Among the specific duties of the chairperson should be to:

- --submit requests to the Board of Elections by phone and letter for obtaining voting machines and having someone give instructions on their use.
- --contact various political party experts (e.g. Republican and/or Democratic county chairpersons) inviting them to come and speak to your group about campaign strategies.
- --negotiate with the appropriate government officials for the purpose of reserving a convenient day when the elected candidates may serve in their offices.

THE ELECTION BALLOT

The second step in carrying out the simulated election activity will be to decide which offices will be put up for election and what motivation will be used to encourage candidates to run. The alternatives for elected office include local, county, state, and perhaps even national government positions. The decision on how many and which offices will be on the ballot should be based on:

--class size
--school size
--available manpower and resources outside of class
--number of potential student candidates who will run

The following is a suggested list of possible offices:

Board of Education
Councilmen
Mayor
County Sheriff
County Clerk
Freeholders or Commissioners
Assemblymen
State Senator
U. S. Representative

The number of people for some offices will depend on the organizational set up of your own county and town or city.

There should be suitable motivation or "reward" provided for winning candidates in the election. For local and county candidates, opportunity for "intern-for-a-day" experiences can usually be arranged through contacting the individuals who hold these government offices. Victorious candidates for offices at the state and national levels might be rewarded with trips to the state capital and Washington, D.C. respectively.

PARTY ORGANIZATION

After the selection of a chairperson and agreement on the specific offices on the election ballot, the next order of business will be the organization and implementation of the PARTIES. You may elect to employ a very simple method such as "Party A" and "Party B", or you may choose an alternate method. One of these alternatives would be to select two

people in a fashion similar to two team captains and have them, in turn, select their co-workers from among your group. Of course, these are general suggestions of possible methods. Your group or faculty advisor may arbitrarily decide on a system in order to define and designate the respective parties.

Following the definition and designation of the parties, the two parties will then meet separately for the first time as groups. This is known as a party CAUCUS. During the caucus the party will choose the following:

A chairperson of the party responsible for all decisions
A co-chairperson of the party
A party name (e.g., RAP - "Realistic Approach to Politics")

The party chairperson is responsible for appointing (or securing volunteers for) the various party committees. Ideally, these committees, which will operate the campaign, should include: Selection Committee, Platform Committee, Campaign Committee, Publicity Committee, Board of Elections, and Registration Committee (the last two being joint committees with bi-partisan representation). The exact size of the committees should be determined by your class and school size. Duties may be combined into fewer committees when the class size is too small for all of these to operate effectively. Furthermore, for maximum practice in democratic procedures, the Selection and Platform Committees might serve in an advisory capacity, making recommendations which require the approval of a majority of all party members before decisions are finalized.

Selection Committee: They choose party candidates to run for the various offices and positions up for election. Note: CANDIDATES CANNOT BE CHOSEN FROM YOUR GROUP. THIS IS WERE YOU GET THE REST OF THE STUDENT BODY INVOLVED. THEY'LL SERVE AS CANDIDATES: YOUR PARTIES WILL FORMULATE THE CAMPAIGNS.

Platform Committee: Decides on the party platform and writes up the various "planks" based on those issues which are deemed to be of most concern and interest to the electorate. These could be of a national, state, local, or even school-focused nature. The party platform should be printed in an attractive format and distributed to students in the school. (A sample of a party platform is included in the appendix).

Publicity Committee: They will utilize the school's public address system, write articles for the school newspaper, and create flyers and posters.

Campaign Committee: This group works in conjunction with the Publicity Committee (in fact, the two can easily be combined). They plot strategy, plan demonstrations for the candidates, help to draft political speeches, etc.

Registration Committee (bi-partisan): This special committee consists of a group of students from each party. They must register each student in the school.

Set aside a specific time of day and a central location where students may come to register during a two-week period. They will fill out an official registration form. (See sample form in appendix). These forms will be filed away alphabetically. No student may vote unless he or she is registered. Make use of P.A. system etc. so that this is clearly understood.

When Election Day comes, you pull out their forms. This means that they are registered and then they may vote. This insures that they only vote once and also verifies their identity.

Your job is to make sure all are registered. Make use of your specific place to register.

Your English class may be the only class that will serve as a common place to contact all of the student body. PLEASE RECEIVE PERMISSION BEFOREHAND.

Board of Elections (bi-partisan): Two people from each party will serve on the Board of Elections during the entire project. The Board settles any disputes that may arise, counts the votes, and expedites the mechanics and activities of Election Day.

SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

The procedure of securing candidates may be done by party members approaching prospective candidates. Another approach is to have would-be candidates fill out petition blanks distributed by the Board of Elections and secure the required number of signatures.

The following information should be included on such a form: name, address, grade, party, office, date, and signature of the Election Board. These completed forms are then returned to the Board of Elections who forward them to both parties. Provisions should also be made for students wishing to run as independents or write-in candidates to meet certain eligibility requirements, such as petition signatures. (See sample petition in appendix).

After all the petitions have been received, check the petitions for the offices, as far as signatures are concerned. Choose the one who will best do the job. THIS SHOULD NOT BE A POPULARITY CONTEST. Candidates should be screened by selection committees on the basis of demonstrated interest, public speaking talents, ability to sell the platform, etc.

OPERATING THE CAMPAIGN

Now that you have your candidate, you must get him/her ready for the election. Each party has their platform, and must prepare the candidate. Give him a run down of the platform. Help him write his speech and brief him on the general agenda for the campaign. If your school permits, decorate the nallways and let the students know what is going on.

A coordinated effort by both your campaign and publicity committees helps to create and build a favorable image for your candidates. This can be achieved through articles in the school newspapers, posters in the corridors, informative flyers, and political announcements on the public address system. Try to involve as much of the student body as possible. Rallies for a candidate prior to formal introduction is a good method of generating enthusiasm for his or her candidacy. Play up the themes of your parties -- such as, for the "Realistic Approach to Politics" or RAP Party, you could use posters and spot ads saying, " . . . the RAP man is coming!! . . ."

ASSEMBLIES

As previously mentioned, it is recommended that two school-wide assemblies be held as part of this project, (though in some situations the schedule will not permit it and all information must be given out through other channels). These assemblies or other channels should be coordinated by the class.

At the first assembly, the simulated election program should be introduced to the student body (including information on how and where to register). A person from the County Board of Elections should give instructions to the students at this time on the use of voting machines. [Note: the Institute for Political and Legal Education has produced a colo cassette/filmstrip entitled "How to Use a Voting Machine" which can be shown in conjunction with or in lieu of other explanation. To purchase a copy, contact the IPLE project office.]

The second assembly should be used to introduce the parties, platforms and candidates. Set your assembly up the way you want it. Introduce your parties and let them speak for as much time as you can permit; but remember that you must split the time up evenly. SHOW NO FAVORTISM. After your assembly is through, you can now start on your election. Have your election as soon as possible after the assembly.

ELECTION DAY

This is where the election board and registration committees go to work. You will have had all your people registered. Next, you'll set up two or three tables depending on how many people you have in your school. Post a sign on the tables that have the letters of the alphabet, (e.g., A -- K Here; and L -- Z Here).

When the students come in to vote, you must inform them where they are to go according to their name.

Make sure you have at least six people during every period at the area where the election is being held. Also make sure you have someone from the election board there with you in case any problems develop.

After the final vote have been registered, the election board official will teach you how to tabulate the votes. There must be at least one person from each party (your Election Board) present when tabulating the votes.

CAMPAIGN "FINANCES"

An optional Finance Committee could be instituted as a non-partisan body to establish "play money" prices for various campaign items. Each member of the school community can be allotted a fixed maximum amount of play money which can be

given to either party. A financial report of the party listing both receipts and expenditures would have to be published and submitted for approval. As an alternative, the party could be designated a certain amount of money by the Board of Elections to budget for posters, speeches, etc. and then be audited later by the Board. In either case, a cost listing for certain activities and items should be established. For example:

FINANCE PRICE LIST

Posters (3' x 5')		P.A. Announcement 30 sec.	$ 15.00
Near cafeteria	$ 3.00		
Near office	2.50	Streamers	3.50
Top floor	1.00		
Bottom floor	.75	Coffee "Meet the Candidate"	75.00
Buttons	.50		
		(Evening) Assembly	100.00
Speeches	25.00		

RAP PARTY FINANCIAL REPORT

To date these are the official receipts and expenditures for our party:

Receipts		Expenditures	
Faculty	$ 25.00	Mayor	
Homeroom 106	10.00	Poster near cafeteria	$ 3.00
Homeroom 108	10.00	40 buttons	20.00
Student Council	200.00	1 speech	25.00
Clerical Staff	20.00		
Freshman class	75.00	Governor	
		Assembly	100.00
TOTAL	$320.00	P.A. time 60 sec.	30.00
		200 buttons	100.00
		2 posters bottom floor	1.50
		All Other Candidates	
		20 buttons	10.00
		1 speech	25.00
		3 posters top floor	3.00
		TOTAL	$317.50

OTHER SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

In order to have the simulated election run smoothly and create maximum interest in the school and community, the following additional activities are suggested:

1. Each committee person could be responsible for registering each person in his designated district. Canvassing or polling of these grade-level or home-room districts should start early.

2. Write a press release for your local newspaper(s) which will publicize the simulated election and inform the local community about your class's activities. (See a sample of one such release included in the appendix). [For a fuller explanation of newspaper publicity techniques, see the IPLE Voter Education curriculum manual.]

SUMMARY

One of the most useful and easiest ways to gain insight and knowledge of the American political system is to participate in this system. That is, in fact, what your group will be doing when you organize and conduct your own student simulated (or "mock") elections in your respective schools. The system looks, from the outside, to be a rather cumbersome and complex one. You will find, after functioning within the guidelines of the system, that it is a good deal more streamlined than you at first thought. The election rules and laws all have a practical purpose, and your group will learn this fact and other laws through your participation within the guidelines.

GOOD LUCK!

HAVE FUN!

Appendix A

SAMPLE REGISTRATION FORM

Burlington City High School
Permanent Registration

Present Grade_____ H.R.____

Name_____ _____ _____
First name in full, Middle Initials Only.

Residence_____
Street Address

_____ _____
Municipality

Are you a citizen of the United States and of New Jersey?____
Will you have resided in said state and in the County of Burlington at least 30 days on or before the next Election?

_____

Are you a Native Born _____ or Naturalized Citizen_____?
(Check One)

State of New Jersey
County of Burlington

I, being duly sworn on oath (or affirmation), depose and say (or affirm), to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the foregoing statements made by me are true and correct.
Sworn and Subscribed before me at _____
this _____ day of _____
19 _____.

_____ _____
Signature of person taking affidavit

_____
Authority of person taking affidavit

Appendix B

SAMPLE PETITION

PETITION FOR OFFICE

I, _____, the undersigned, a qualified citizen of _____ City, of _____ County in the state of New Jersey, affiliating with the _____ Party and that Party only, hereby request that my name, to-wit: _____, be placed upon the official primary ballot of said party for primary election as a candidate for the office of _____ _____ and I pledge myself to abide by the results of said primary election and qualify if elected.

(Signed)_____
Name of Candidate

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 19____.

_____
Election Board

SIGNATURES:

1._____ 6._____

2._____ 7._____

3._____ 8._____

4._____ 9._____

5._____ 10._____

Appendix C

POLITICAL PARTY PLATFORM

During the simulated election, the student parties will be required to formulate individual platforms. Contained below is a sample platform to be used as a representative model.

PREAMBLE - "The people are cynical about the idea that a rosy future is just around the corner . . . They feel that the government is run for the privileged few rather than for the many--and they are right . . . We want to speak for, and with, the citizens of our country . . ."

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - "We strongly oppose the use of housing or community development programs to impose arbitrary housing patterns on unwilling communities. Neither do we favor dispersing large numbers of people away from their homes and neighborhoods against their will."

LABOR - "We will continue to search for realistic and fair solutions to emergency labor disputes, guided by two basic principles: first, that the health and safety of the people should always be paramount; second, that collective bargaining should be kept as free as possible from government interference."

WOMEN - "We pledge a priority effort to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, to encourage the availability of maternity benefits to all working women, and to permit working families to deduct from gross income, as a business expense, all housekeeping and child care costs. And we pledge the appointment of women to positions of top responsibility, including the Cabinet and the Supreme Court. And we finally pledge that the Federal government will fund comprehensive, developmental child care programs that will be family-centered, locally controlled, and universally available."

LAW ENFORCEMENT - "We pledge to intensify efforts to prevent criminal access to all weapons, including special emphasis on cheap, readily obtainable handguns, and at the same time, to safeguard the right of responsible citizens to collect, own and use firearms for legitimate purposes, including hunting, target shooting, and self-defense.

DEFENSE - "We will insist on the firm control of specific costs and projects . . . The military budget can be reduced substantially with no weakening of national security."

AMNESTY - "We state our firm intention to declare an amnesty, on an appropriate basis, when the fighting has ceased and our troops and prisoners of war have returned."

HOUSING - "We pledge to overhaul completely the Federal Housing Administration to make it a consumer-oriented agency, and to use the full faith and credit of the Treasury to provide direct, low-interest loans to finance the construction and purchase of decent housing."

LABOR-MANAGEMENT - "We oppose the Administration's effort to impose arbitration in transportation disputes."

Appendix D

PRESS RELEASE

This is a sample press release adapted from an actual article featuring the Institute's voter education program. Note the techniques utilized in developing the format and content.

September 3, 1972

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information contact Scott Callan, Publicity Chairman, Holy Cross High School at (609) 461-5403.

(caption and photo attached)

The Institute for Political and Legal Education of Holy Cross High School is sponsoring a special mock election in order to provide the students with voter registration experience. By using voting machines and by listening to debates and discussions by actual candidates and present office holders, the students learn the details of the election process.

The Institute experimental class is one of ten federally-funded classes in New Jersey, acting as a model for both the state and nation. Professional training is provided in politics, government, and community services through work in the classroom as well as in the community.

(MORE)

ADD 1 - Simulation Election . . .

The teacher-coordinator, Mr. John Goudy, stated that the students divided themselves into two political parties, after they received training by county party leaders. The students are now screening candidates to run on their party tickets.

In order to vote in this election, students will have to go through simulated voter registration using copies of the actual form. Student Election Board Chairman, Richard Felice, is running registration.

Assembly programs will be aired in order to provide the student body an opportunity to hear the views of student candidates running for State senator, assemblyman, and mayor.

The members of the class will be assigned to each candidate as campaign managers. This will involve speech writing, developing campaign materials, and publicity for candidates.

The students elected will serve one full day in office taking on the roles of their counterparts. Voting machines will be used in the election.

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